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TAGS: PREL KPKO UNSC MASS EG SU

SUBJECT: SUDAN: SADIQ AL MAHDI TO WASHINGTON IF U.S. "READY TO LISTEN"

Classified by Counselor for Economic and Political Affairs
Catherine Hill-Herndon for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (SBU) During a July 5 courtesy call at his Cairo office, Sadiq Al Mahdi, head of the Sudanese opposition National Umma Party, Imam of the Ansar, and former prime minister of Sudan told poloff that he might visit Washington for consultations on Sudan, but only if U.S. officials are "ready to listen to the Sudanese." The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) "are both dead," he said, and "we must start again realistically." Al Mahdi will decide on traveling to the U.S. after hearing from his daughter Marian, currently in the U.S. and in contact with U.S. officials.

¶2. (SBU) Al Mahdi believes that the CPA "is failing" primarily because the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) has not fostered inclusiveness, is preserving totalitarianism over democracy, and is failing to make north-south unity attractive. Furthermore, by not being "comprehensive at all," the CPA has created power and wealth sharing agreements that exclude Darfur, making negotiating proportionate agreements for that province much more difficult. In Darfur, even bringing DPA non-signatories on board with a peace agreement will not be sufficient, Al Mahdi continued, as long as the NCP insists on maintaining control there through Darfur's division into three administrative regions.

¶3. (SBU) Al Mahdi said "we must start from scratch" to ensure true proportionate wealth and power sharing across all of Sudan. Al Mahdi welcomes UN peacekeepers to pacify Darfur ("even the idea of the UN coming will help"). International and internal pressure on the NCP to return Darfur to one administrative region instead of three is key to help "build confidence" for peace, he said.

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